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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE--BUREAU OF MINES

THE THIRD ANNUAL WEST VIRGINIA STATE SAFETY DAY MEET, BLUEFIELD, W. VA., SEPTEMBER 22, 1928 [1]

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The Third Annual West Virginia State Safety Day Meet was held on the Bluefield College Athletic Field, Bluefield, W. Va., on September 22, 1928, and without a doubt was the largest and most successful event of its kind ever held in the United States. Most of the coal mining companies and mining communities throughout the State of West Virginia were represented at the meet.

The number of people that attended the field day activities can safely be estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000. It was said that there were more than 3,000 automobiles parked on the Bluefield College athletic grounds at one time during the afternoon. Ideal weather conditions prevailed throughout the day. Although the week previous to the meet had been so rainy that arrangements were made in case of rain to hold the meet indoors.

The Annual West Virginia State Safety Day was first instituted and sponsored by Mr. Robert M. Lambie, Chief of the West Virginia Department of Mines in 1926. Through his untiring efforts and the cooperation of the U. S. Bureau of Mines, the coal mining companies of West Virginia, and their employees the event has become one of great magnitude. In 1926 the meet was held at Huntington on August 21 with 121 first-aid teams participating. The 1927 meet was held at Morgantown in the Mountaineer Stadium with 141 teams participating, and in 1928 180 first-aid teams, composed of white miner teams, colored miner teams, and boy scout teams, or approximately 1,080 men, participated in the meet at Bluefield. Practically every mining region in the State of West Virginia was represented by mine officials, miners, and their families. The States of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania were well represented by mine operators and others.

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Field Arrangement

The entire field was marked off with enclosures of ample dimensions to accommodate a first-aid team while working on a problem. There were 180 such spaces to accommodate all of the teams that participated. It was not possible to have all teams perform at one time, because there were not enough judges. This necessitated dividing the total number of teams into two groups or sections. In the first section there were 80 white miner teams and in the second section there were 100 teams divided as follows: 65 white miner teams, 27 colored miner teams, and 8 boy scout teams.

Three representative first-aid problems that involved the fundamental principles of first-aid work such as controlling bleeding, artificial respiration, physical shock, dressings for open wounds to prevent infection, simple and compound fractures and dislocations were worked by each team that participated in the meet.

One group of teams performed at one time while the other group was idle. A lay judge was assigned to each team as it performed and a supervising judge was assigned to a block of four teams. With a few exceptions the judges were men from outside the State of West Virginia and were safety engineers, State mine inspectors, mine operators, and miners who were sent to the meet by their respective companies or State mine departments. In addition there were 15 men from the safety division of the United States Bureau of Mines who participated in this meet as judges. All of the judges were well versed in first-aid work. Particularly was this true of the supervising judges, who were selected with the utmost care. The progressive system of judging was used in the contest, each judge alternating from Section 1 to Section 2, then to Section 3, and so on, progressing to the number of first-aid teams assigned him.

Three problems were worked by all participating teams. When the scores were finally announced, 11 teams were tied for first place. It was necessary for the teams to perform two tie problems to determine the winners of the meet.

Winners of the Meet and Prizes

There were three sets of prizes for the teams that participated in the meet, one set of prizes for the white miners, a second set for the colored miners, and a third set for the boy scouts. The scores of each of these groups were recorded separately.

An important feature of the State Safety Day was the awarding of the "Sentinels of Safety" trophy, which was presented by the Explosives Engineer to the Gary No. 2 mine of the U. S. Coal & Coke Co. at Gary, W. Va. This is the third consecutive year that the U. S. Coal & Coke Co. has captured the honors in the National Safety Competition as having the lowest accident record for the bituminous mines entered in the contest. The contest is conducted under the auspices of the United States Bureau of Mines.

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Demonstration of Explosibility of Coal-Dust, and Use of Rock-Dust as a Preventive

One of the outstanding features of the day from the viewpoint of accident prevention was the demonstration of a coal-dust explosion in a specially constructed gallery situated at one end of the field and in clear view of all that attended the meet. There were two distinct demonstrations given on the field during the meet. The first demonstration portrayed what happens in a coal mine that is not rock-dusted, in the event of a blown-out shot or ignition of fire damp (methane and air). The second demonstration showed the effects of rock-dusting or, in other words, how coal-dust explosions may be prevented through the proper use of rock-dust. These demonstrations were made under the supervision of the United States Bureau of Mines. Both demonstrations were very effective in showing the explosibility of coal-dust and the use of rock-dust as a preventive of coal-dust explosions.

Speakers

A number of prominent speakers addressed the large gathering on safety and accident prevention work and kindred subjects.

Preparatory Training Work

All of the first-aid teams that participated in the contest at Bluefield were trained jointly by safety directors of the State Department of Mines of West Virginia and the United States Bureau of Mines first-aid instructors. The Bureau of Mines had seven instructors engaged in team-training in West Virginia for four weeks prior to the contest, and in addition the Bureau of Mines Safety Car No. 7 with two instructors assisted with the organization and training of the teams. Bureau of Mines Car No. 7 devotes its full time to training miners and officials in West Virginia in first-aid, mine-rescue, and other safety work. Its official headquarters is at Huntington, W. Va. To assist the State Department in training the large number of teams that participated in the contest it was necessary for the United States Bureau of Mines to take men from other mining districts in the United States. The States from which these men came are Montana, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Alabama.

First-aid training is a part of the bureau's regular safety educational campaign in the mining, metallurgical, petroleum, and quarrying industries. Since the bureau came into existence in 1910 approximately 300,000 miners have been trained in first-aid and safety methods. The bureau cooperates to the fullest extent with State Mining Departments, mine operators, and others who are engaged in the promotion of safety and accident-prevention work; each year aid is given in one form or another to mineral industries in the promotion and handling of first-aid meets. For the fiscal year 1928 assistance and cooperation was given in the handling of 50 first-aid contests held in various parts of the United States, and in most instances the preparatory training work was done by Bureau of Mines employees.

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The bureau maintains 10 safety cars and 11 safety stations situated in or adjacent to mining districts. The personnel of these cars and safety stations are actively engaged throughout the year in giving training to the employees and officials of the mineral industries in safety and first-aid methods.

The following tabulation of training conducted in the state of West Virginia from July 1, 1910 to June 30, 1928 shows that 23,180 men were trained in initial first-aid, 877 in mine-rescue work, 2,121 in combination training (first-aid and mine-rescue), 954 in additional first-aid training, 130 in additional mine-rescue training, and 27 in additional combination training (first-aid and mine-rescue). In other words, from July 1, 1910, to June 30, 1928, a total of 27,289 persons in West Virginia were given the Bureau of Mines complete course of training in first-aid and mine-rescue methods. In addition to the first-aid and mine-rescue training given by the bureau in the State of West Virginia during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1928, over 200 mine officials were given instruction in the advanced training course for mine-rescue and recovery operations following mine fires and explosions.

Number of Men Trained in West Virginia by the United States Bureau of Mines During the Period July 1, 1910, to June 30,1928

Period	Initial training			Additional training		
	F.A.	M.R.	Comb.	F.A.	M.R.	Comb.
July 1, 1910 to June 30, 1920	1,212	146	1,355	0	0	0
July 1, 1920 to June 30, 1923	2,962	274	425	285	14	15
July 1, 1923 to June 30, 1924	1,405	29	182	124	0	6
July 1, 1924 to June 30, 1925	3,859	115	124	365	9	4
July 1, 1925 to June 30, 1926	5,468	7	2	74	0	0
July 1, 1926 to June 30, 1927	4,548	0	6	32	0	0
July 1, 1927 to June 30, 1928	3,726	306	27	74	107	2
Total	23,180	877	2,121	954	130	27

Grand total number men trained --- 27,289

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